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SCOTTISH POWER CENTRES

from the Early Middle Ages
to the Twentieth Century

edited by

Sally Foster

Allan Macinnes

Ranald MacInnes



Formalising the mechanisms of state power: early Scottish lordship from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries

Stephen T. Driscoll

POWER AND THE ORIGINS OF THE SCOTTISH STATE

The social changes responsible for the development of the Scottish state remain obscure, despite recent advances made in Dark-Age studies by both archaeologists and historians.¹ Amongst textual scholars a consensus exists that the ninth to thirteenth centuries was the critical period in the development of the Scottish state. Certainly by the thirteenth century Scotland had all the characteristics of a mature state: only a society secure in its political workings, social institutions, and national identity could consider a four-year-old foreign girl to be a suitable monarch.² In the past these social and political changes have been identified with the introduction of feudalism, which was linked to the Anglo-Norman influences. Whether the notion of "Normanisation" is appropriate for explaining these processes of social development is a question I wish to explore.

Archaeological investigations have played a relatively small part in exploring these problems, despite the potential value of material remains as contemporary records of the period. Although there are a great number of archaeological monuments from this formative period – mottes, churches, and sculptured stones – few have been the subject of the sustained archaeological investigation enjoyed in recent times by key Dark-Age sites. While the appearance of more abundant administrative documents provides the clearest sign of the maturity of state institutions, the physical remains, even in their unexcavated condition, are important because they are direct expressions of social conditions and, more significantly, created the settings where the social practices of the state actually took place.

During the four centuries preceding the Wars of Independence ways of exercising power altered significantly and studying the physical settings where power was exercised helps us understand these changes. These settings could be linked with more sophisticated techniques of controlling people and resources, which can be described as *administrative* thereby avoiding the technical questions associated with feudalism. In looking at archaeological sites, evidence of administration emerges as a more appropriate focus for the study of state formation than the elusive signs of "Normanisation".

If we are correct in thinking that the ninth to thirteenth century was a critical period with respect to the exercise of power, then we must look to archaeology not only for guidance about the economic and structural changes in society during the period but also for indications of the ideological mechanisms connecting social changes to the development of the state.³ One of the clearest changes observed elsewhere during the process of state formation is the "emancipation from real or fictive kinship as the basis of relations between the occupants of government roles and those who they govern".⁴ Elsewhere I have tried to identify the incipient tendency amongst the Picts towards an administrative structure,⁵ but for the period under consideration here it seems that the significant difference is that the exclusively kin-based social and political relations which characterise the early historic period become subjected to increasingly formalised relations of lordship. This culminated in the adoption of feudal legal practices, which are associated with the documentation of rights and obligations in written form.⁶ In looking at the archaeological evidence, we will be searching for insights about the new social relations by looking at the centres of power through which they were constituted.

The problem posed by the study of power centres in the ninth to thirteenth centuries is to relate the imperfectly understood physical remains to the social relations which were reproduced there, and to link these to

the major social developments of the age. In short, how did the creation of new kinds of social arenas relate to the development of the state? Dramatic changes in the scale and form of architecture provide one of the most compelling indications of changes in the nature of power relations. Far from simply reflecting social change or variation in taste, I would like to suggest that specific types of monuments were part of the enabling technology by which new political structures were created and reproduced. I believe that the physical qualities of these monuments were instrumental in the construction of the social processes which characterise statehood.

These developments took place at various social settings and at distinct political scales, but here I will concentrate on two aspects of the development of the state: first, the question of royal authority and regional lordship; and second, episcopal authority and the parochial system. One might examine a wide range of material culture from pottery to sculpture, but here I will focus on the architectural monuments which served as the centres of power.

In the context of a study which focuses on architectural monuments (few of which survive as complete buildings), I will use the phrase *power centre* to refer to an arena where social relations are negotiated. To allow active social roles to both the dominated and the dominating, power must be considered as a reciprocal property of social relations with characteristics which are particular to both the ruler and the ruled. Some of these characteristics are manifest in the physical remains of the settings where the authority of the dominant individual or group was asserted, displayed, and above all negotiated. Negotiation often took place through very formalised social situations. It is nevertheless an important aspect of process, since effective lordship requires not only the maintenance of position of the élite, but also the confirmation of value of the contribution to the social order made by the ruled. Both perspectives are required or the significance of a monument can be misconstrued. For instance, too often the imagery of lordship conveyed by castles crushes the sense of a collective identity or community which fortified estate centres must have conveyed to a wider population.

In the case of centres of lordship (whether royal or not), the activities through which power relations were negotiated included the collection of renders and delivery of tribute, the periodic feasting and celebrations occasioned by these or other socially significant events, such as the installation of a new lord or the acceptance of a new "client" or vassal, as well as such politically charged events as marriages and funerals. Perhaps the most explicit and enduring of these events would have been the hearing of judicial cases and the resolutions of disputes, which presumably would have been conducted at the same times as the collection of renders

and occasionally have been recorded in texts. The social significance of the rituals of vassalage, their seasonal nature, and their associated ceremonial practices have been the subject of important studies on the continent, but have yet to be deeply examined in Scotland.⁷

At religious centres there was an analogous set of occasions which arose through the administration of landholdings, which would have been dominated by economic considerations and also have played a similar role in affirming the authoritative order. Observance of the devotional in religious life generated an additional series of regularly occurring events associated with universal and local feast-days. A number of significant social events such as weddings and funerals clearly involved overlapping sets of relations. Both the secular and religious centres therefore hosted occasions which involved more or less formalised sets of practices that contributed to the reproduction of the social positions of both the powerful and the subservient. A significant proportion of these would have been conducted on a seasonal or annual cycle, as determined by the agricultural year and ecclesiastical calendar, but others, such as funerals, would not be predictable.

INSTRUMENTS OF ROYAL POWER – THANES AND KNIGHTS

The political history of medieval Scotland is dominated by royal acts, but we have insufficient information on royal centres of the ninth to thirteenth century to focus on them exclusively. It is more productive to look at the means by which kings extended their authority throughout the countryside and thereby distinguished their dominion from that of other nobles. Regional lordship was associated with two institutions with entirely different histories: the thanages, which probably emerged from an existing system of Pictish lordship,⁸ and the knight service, which is associated with later feudal lordship. Traditionally, knight service has been identified with the motte-and-bailey castle.⁹ Although this identification is problematic, the motte itself does represent a significant shift in approach to the exercise of power. To appreciate the difference between the two institutions, one must first look at the more antique social institution and its physical manifestations, which are far less archaeologically prominent than the motte.

In the past I have used the concept of the thanage to provide a structure to Pictish settlement archaeology and in so doing have projected some of the characteristics of the thanage of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries back towards the eighth.¹⁰ If, like Skene and more recent commentators, we are to accept the "Pictish" quality of the thanage, then we also accept that the principal institution which enabled the regional king-

ships of the ninth century to develop into a national kingdom had deep roots.¹¹ Although the thanage persisted well into the Middle Ages, it could be said that the presence of knights demonstrates that the kingdom had become a state, because knight service is a clear sign of the tendency to monopolise coercive resources and is a sign that governance was being (partially) freed of kinship strictures.

In his recent study of thanes and thanages in the eleventh to fourteenth centuries, Sandy Grant has picked up where Barrow left off and has made the political and fiscal aspects of the institution more apparent. This is a significant contribution, because, useful as "Pre-feudal shires and thanes" is, it is hard to tease out firm generalisations from Barrow's study. For instance, Barrow did not say that thanages were a Pictish invention, but suggests that such a conclusion was on the cards. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that it is on the maps. Both the "Thanages" map in the *Historical Atlas* and Grant's distribution map show an overwhelming concentration in the north-east between the Forth and Inverness.¹² As Skene pointed out so long ago, geographical logic provides the strongest argument for the essentially Pictish quality of thanages.

The nature of this quality is not entirely clear. Thanages certainly should be regarded as estates, but estates with special properties. Grant offers the attractive notion that the thanage was roughly a primitive petty kingdom – the Pictish equivalent of the land of the Irish *tuath* (whatever that would have been called by the Picts). This can be supported by the linguistic argument that suggests that the terms *toisech* and the thane describe one and the same person. This line of argument, which was originated by Jackson in his study of the twelfth-century *Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer*,¹³ has been endorsed and elaborated by Bannerman.¹⁴ Unfortunately, there seems to be an order of magnitude of difference between the land of a Scottish thanage (approximately a rural parish) and the land of an Irish *tuath* (approximately an Irish barony), which typically might be expected to contain several parishes and be three times as large as a thanage.¹⁵ We should probably identify a common ancient land unit behind both the thanage and the parish, the antiquity of which has been demonstrated for eastern Scotland by John Rodgers.¹⁶ To estimate the size of Pictish petty kingdoms it would probably be better to compare them with the ancient "Celtic" earldoms.

What is most important about Grant's study of thanages is that he provides a dynamic account of the growth and decline of the institution. In particular he has made it much easier to appreciate how thanages contributed to the upkeep of the kingdom both in fiscal and administrative terms. This compels us to recognise them as the most widespread of the centres where relationships of power were negotiated.

DEVELOPING MECHANISMS OF ROYAL POWER IN THE TENTH CENTURY

The political narrative for the tenth and eleventh centuries shows that the foreign policy of the kings of the Scots was essentially that of the war band writ large. If there was a significant difference from the practices of seventh- and eighth-century kings in north Britain, it was that territorial expansion became an achievable military objective by the tenth century, not the least because effective ways of holding conquered lands had been developed. Although the scale of warfare by the tenth century was apparently much larger, royal prestige and security were ultimately still based on winning booty and making conquests. For its age this should not be regarded as backward: plunder and tribute provided the underpinning of the Carolingian empire.¹⁷ Such a policy, however, required underdeveloped or vulnerable neighbours to exploit, and as England slowly recovered from the chaos introduced by the Vikings this became a less viable option for the Scots.

It is the nature of the historical sources to emphasise the toing and froing of royalty, particularly between Scotia and England. Major careers such as that of Constantine II (900–943) and Malcolm I (943–957) seem to have consisted of little else. Despite various setbacks, these campaigns were largely successful and the realm of *Alba* expanded to include the Lothians and Cumbria. The period 966–1005 has a particular significance since it marks the final dismissal of rival branches claiming the crown.¹⁸ In effect, the transition from Kenneth II (971–995) to Malcolm II (1005–34) completed the dismantling of the traditional Celtic kinship principles which provided a broad section of the kin group with a legal claim to the throne. This change was not simply about limiting eligibility to a narrower familial group, but it carried with it an implication of changes in political structure, because kinship organisation hitherto provided *the* ideological model for political organisation.¹⁹ Moreover, it is likely that such changes were not confined to the highest offices, but extended to inherited positions at various social strata and may be responsible for creating offices such as thanes.

We have seen that thanages were probably based upon a system of Pictish estates or petty tribal kingdoms, but the terms "thane", "thanage", and "shire" are clearly English. Grant, in explaining this English terminology, suggests that the establishment of the thanage as a formal and deliberate institution pre-dates David I (1124–53). He goes on to argue that the scale of the system makes it unlikely to have been developed entirely during the reign of Malcolm III (1058–93) and proposes that the rule of his predecessor, Malcolm II (1005–34), is the more likely period of formation. Not only was it in Malcolm II's reign that the royal succession was streamlined but, Grant argues, there was sufficient contact with the

Anglo-Saxon world to make the adoption of the English terminology plausible.

Although we may be able to identify the origins of the terminology, we are still left with the problem of how the kings of Scots came to hold all of these thanages in the first place. Presumably they represent former estates appropriated in the course of establishing such a strong royal house. No doubt this internal acquisition was pursued when the kings got tired of going to England for a fight. Those trips to England must have been an important social and political dynamic: the campaigns of the tenth century will have required large numbers of men. Organising and supplying military levies would have been a powerful stimulus to the creation of the system of thanes. It is the extent and scale of the king's authority that distinguished the king from other magnates. Although some of the more obvious ways of displaying that authority were little changed, the organisation to control these resources was a by-product of this expansion. Even in the eleventh century the outward acts of the king were little different from those of his predecessors 150 years earlier. Malcolm III made repeated forays into Northumbria purely for booty.²⁰

We have come to recognise the significance of peripatetic kingship from the seventh or eighth century in northern Britain,²¹ where it was an essential component of a personal kingship which required the king to move around a great deal in order to exercise a power based on face-to-face contact with his subjects, clients, or vassals. This contact occurred in during the collection of renders and the performance of other lordly and regal acts and it was essential for maintaining his relationship with his leading supporters. Besides collecting rents, these may also have been scouting trips when he sought new signings for the army and perhaps distributed some of the booty. One can easily imagine alternate cycles of foreign raiding expeditions and domestic visitations: home and away fixtures, as it were. Grant describes the thanages as stepping stones for getting around the kingdom, although he perhaps underplays the importance of the thanages for the exercise of royal authority domestically. Not only did they enable kings to stretch the practice of peripatetic lordship to the limits imposed by available modes of transport, but they provided the means by which that lordship was ordered and created a setting for the encounter between the lord and his subjects.

From a fiscal perspective it is tempting to consider thanes as little more than factors, whose efforts provided the bulk of the royal income. Grant argues that the royal fisc depended upon the thanages for the bulk of its revenue until *after* the Wars of Independence when wool and burgh taxation start to make a substantial contribution. Only then did the financial significance of the thanage diminish. But money is not everything, especially in a country where wealth is not easily measured in coin or move-

able wealth. On a political level the thanages provided the regional centres where royal dominion was displayed and exercised. In addition to the substantial and dependable income, these estates probably also continued to provide access to warriors required for the expansion of royal authority domestically and the acquisition of booty and territory externally. Although there is little to go on, we should also imagine that the position of the thane, whatever the history of a thanage's tenure, must have been selected or ratified by the lord. In this sense the thanage was an instrument which provided the kings of Scots with two key attributes of a true state: a near monopoly on coercive power and an administrative structure which could be freed from fictional or real kinship as the sole basis of tenure.

Against this background, the introduction of knight service as an instrument of royal authority seems to complement that of the thanage. From the end of the eleventh century knights appear in those areas which were not covered by the thanage system: the Lothians, Galloway, and Strathclyde. The enfeoffment of knights represented a different solution to the problem of extending royal authority into the countryside. Knights held smaller units of land and were not expected to produce great incomes; they were supposed to produce well-equipped military muscle.²² In time knights became an essential component of royal military strength. A component which was even less dependent on the ancient regional magnates. This also helped to extend the state's coercive monopoly. The history of early Scottish feudal endowments makes it clear that a significant proportion of these people were not local, in contrast to the apparent predominance of the local affiliations of the Celtic thanes. This may have made the knights more readily interchangeable and, because they were not imbedded in the local social network at their time of appointment, this made them more like civil servants whose primary loyalty was to the state rather than the regions, at least at the start. It is well known that once established the incomers quickly involved themselves in regional politics and social networks and inevitably some developed into major players within their area.

DEVELOPMENTS IN ÉLITE ARCHITECTURE: FROM HILLFORT TO CAPUT

The archaeology of thanages is not particularly well understood and by comparison with the standardised layout of the motte-and-bailey castle there does not appear to be a consistent set of formal traits. Perhaps when dealing with centres of such antiquity consistency should not be expected, although we might expect to be able to distinguish between the seat of a thane and that of a knight given their different origins and social

characteristics. A useful starting place for making this comparison is Grant's list of 71 thanages. This is the most critical list currently available, although he would not regard it as exhaustive, given that many thanages will have left no written record of their status (particularly those thanes whose lords were not kings but regional magnates). The list provides a means of comparing the better-documented feudal knights, who have been identified with the motte, with the less visible Celtic nobles in the thanages, who are not identified with any particular type of archaeological monument.

In comparing Grant's list with the recent census of mottes²³ we find that of the 71 thanages there are about 10 which contain a motte.²⁴ This use of the motte by thanes is surprisingly rare given that there are over 250 known mottes, many of which are found in the north-east where thanages are well represented. One might have expected that architectural fashion and military advantage would have led to more widespread adoption of these earth-and-timber castles by thanes if their popularity was simply a question of fashion or functional advantage. We will return to the motte, but their relative absence at thanages raises a more pressing question: what did the caput of the majority of thanages look like?

If we go back to the eighth century we find that the preferred type of secular elite residence was a small hillfort, often of modest size and by preference sited on a craggy eminence or prominent hill (Foster, this volume). In exceptional cases these developed into complex structures referred to as nuclear forts.²⁵ These exceptional cases feature a hierarchical division of space, where the most significant residential areas were located deep within the sequence of enclosing ramparts. Visual prominence of the principal dwelling was achieved by utilising the natural topography creating an organic relationship between natural landscape and the architectural form. Although these sites are frequently visually striking, significant limitations arise from this reliance on topography. In particular, such sites often were incapable of providing a level stance for a grand and imposing public hall and also may not have provided a stately or impressive approach.

All such hillforts, including major places with royal associations like Dunadd in Argyll and Dundurn in Strathearn, known through modern excavation ceased to be occupied by the tenth century. There are many possible explanations of this. Some places may have become tainted by too strong association with rival or failed claimants for royal status. For example, perhaps Giric's association with Dundurn made it too politically charged to be reused by his victorious rivals, while the catastrophic end to Alt Clut in the Viking raid of 870 must have discredited Dumbarton as a centre of authority for some time. Ultimately the hillfort did

succumb to a new architectural idiom, but it was not the fashion for the motte and bailey. For most of Scotland the adopted form could be described as a timber castle, but this was not a straight forward or universal development. In the west Dunadd seems to have gone out of use as a high status dwelling rather abruptly, while other early historic strongholds, like Dunollie,²⁶ indicate a kind of continuity of use until the late Middle Ages. This can be paralleled at other, lesser establishments, which also experienced a slow decline, as for instance at the dun known as Macewan's Castle at Kilfinan in Cowal, where a rectangular turf-built structure was inserted into the dun after the twelfth century, from which pottery and other finds from as late as the fourteenth century were recovered.²⁷

In the east few of the early historic forts show any sign of later reuse and, in this respect, the apparent continuity from the early to late Middle Ages at Edinburgh and Stirling should probably be regarded as exceptional.²⁸ At less exalted places the timber castle was probably more prevalent, but it is particularly difficult to document this because of the lack of excavations. We must rely upon surface remains and on analogies. For example, Dunning is one of four thanages in Strathearn, none of which have mottes or later masonry castles. Thethane of Dunning was the earl's man and witnessed two of the charters for Inchaffray Abbey around 1200.²⁹ Just south of Dunning is a slight hill, known as Dunknock, upon which once stood a multi-vallate fortification, not unlike the small hillforts of the early historic period. No upstanding earthworks remain, but the site, which has been revealed as a crop mark, has not been excavated. However, taking into account both its situation adjacent to the post-medieval manor of Pitcairns and its proximity to the parish church of St Serf, this enclosure is the most likely site of the caput of the thanage.³⁰ It appears to be significant that the interior enclosed by the summit defences is relatively spacious and level.

In suggesting that the caput of Dunning was at Dunknock, I am proposing that it was a Scottish variation of the earth-and-timber castle. Elsewhere in Britain enclosed noble residences are a common phenomenon of the period. Since King and Alcock published their study on the "Ringworks of England and Wales"³¹ considerable excavation has taken place at early castles where the presence of substantial and sophisticated rectangular timber structures have come to be expected.³² If we suppose that a thane's caput consisted of an enclosure surrounding a great hall and buildings associated with the management of the estate, probably with a church nearby, then we are doing no more than suggesting that thanes were following a royal precedent, as at the royal castle of Clunie.³³ Although ramparts and other substantial earthworks are the only features likely to survive from such castles, too much attention can

be focused on them. In excavated ring-works the principal building was a hall, where public and estate business could be conducted. A common feature was the large, central room with smaller private chambers at one or both ends. Archaeological evidence suggests that these halls were surprisingly large and architecturally sophisticated and should be recognised as the physical manifestation of lordly power, since it was here that power relations were publicly negotiated and affirmed. They could accommodate large crowds: at Goltho, Lincolnshire the ninth- and tenth-century halls were both about 25 by 7 metres (just about big enough to play basketball in).³⁴

It is worth considering Goltho in some detail because the comprehensive excavations have exposed a remarkably detailed sequence of development. A series of three timber halls were built within an earthen rampart starting about AD 850. Each of these buildings was part of a complex of timber structures laid out to create a rude courtyard. Each successive hall was distinguished from its predecessor and was more architecturally ambitious than the other buildings within the complex. These halls have been reconstructed as wide-aisled buildings with interior arcading in which Guy Beresford sees a reflection of basilican design. This sequence of halls was altered around 1080, when a motte was inserted into one corner and the ring-work was transformed into a bailey. The hall associated with the motte was sited in the same place as the previous ones, but the space occupied by the motte forced the buildings supporting the productive side of the manor to be excluded from the enclosure. The documentation associated with Goltho has led Beresford to conclude that, prior to 1080, this was the seat of a thane.³⁵ He goes on to suggest that in form and scale it was probably typical of a thane's estate centre. The construction of the motte marked an important transition from being a locally ruled estate to a dependency of a distant magnate managed by a tenant.

Although distant from Scotland, the importance of Goltho is not that we can see how the hall dominated the site from the ninth century onwards, but that in so doing it emulated royal architectural practices on a smaller scale. Larger great halls were to be found relatively nearby at Northampton (30 by 8 metres) in the eighth century³⁶ and closer to home at the Northumbrian royal vill of Yeavering,³⁷ where the halls can be seen as the focal point of a loosely ordered set of domestic buildings, many of which presumably related to running the estate. The importance of the halls has also been demonstrated at the late Saxon royal palace at Cheddar.³⁸ Enclosures are prominent at none of these sites, but churches are a constant feature.

Returning to Dunning, the greatest influence on its form is likely to have come from Forteviot which is less than 5 km to the east. Alcock has

argued that the tantalisingly sophisticated and frustratingly decontextualised evidence of early medieval carved stones, which includes a monumental arch, indicates the presence of a significant church and that this church was part of a royal palace complex from the ninth century.³⁹ The construction of important churches at royal palaces was not common in the Celtic west, but was found among the Anglo-Saxons and was of course a common feature of European royal palaces (such as Aachen, Frankfurt, and Paderborn just to mention well-excavated sites). We will return to this theme and the significance of European developments later. For the moment it is sufficient to observe that they clearly exerted a powerful influence on the members of the traditional Celtic élite, an influence which Forteviot shows pre-dated the feudalisation of Scotland. Although there may be no way of determining the historicity of the traditional identification of Malcolm III with Forteviot, there should be little question that here was one of the major centres of the Scottish kingdom from the ninth century to the late twelfth century.⁴⁰

Regardless of the pace at which the new architectural forms of the hall and courtyard were adopted in the established caputs, or their specific inspiration (English or continental), the replacement of the traditional form associated with noble residential authority (i.e. the nuclear fort or crannog) by a palace type of complex inevitably redefined the relationship of the ruler to the ruled. The noble centre, the caput, based upon the hall, shifted the focus of legitimacy from the martial ramparts to the ceremonial hall. Additionally, this new architectural repertoire may have been too sophisticated to have been entirely the work of the local estate-based community which previously played an important role in the construction and maintenance of lordly residences.⁴¹ Such changes may also have had a major impact on the kinds of social events that took place in these royal or noble centres. Although many of the relations of production might not have significantly altered, one senses that these great halls were intended to create a setting for more formalised events, which may imply more formalised social relations. Unfortunately, until there is an excavation in Scotland which is as comprehensive as Goltho, we can only guess at how the process of adopting such halls took place and merely speculate about their likely architectural form.

One isolated piece of evidence which suggests that we should consider the common existence of arcaded timber halls in eleventh century is preserved on the carving of the hog-backed stone in Luss churchyard. It is widely believed that the detailing of hog-backed stones derived from domestic architecture⁴² and at Luss the sides of the stone are decorated with intersecting round-headed arches with plain capitals. One of the most attractive interpretations of this eleventh-century monument is that it represents the interior of an idealised lordly hall.

MEANINGS OF MOTTES

Mottes represent an independent architectural tradition associated with noble centres which had conspicuous continental roots and, in England, a firm link with feudalism and military conquest. The flat-topped, sheer-sided earthen mound is the most recognisable of the field monuments of this period, but as naked geometric forms they are not particularly revealing. Fortunately the mound is not the whole story. It is simply the most durable element of a timber castle, which could be both large and sophisticated.⁴³ The motte itself in its plainest form was a stockaded fighting platform, but it was generally accompanied by an enclosure, which might also be on an elevated platform, known as the bailey. The bulk of the domestic elements of the castle would have been found here.

In Scotland few mottes have been excavated in modern times⁴⁴ and published (Cruggleton, Kier Knowe of Drum, Castlehill of Strachan, Castle Hill Peebles, Barton Hill Kinnaird)⁴⁵ and their chronology is more uncertain than it ought to be. On the basis of the available archaeological evidence and the relevant charters,⁴⁶ it appears that mottes are not particularly a phenomenon of the first wave of feudal endowments in Scotland. Outside the burghs they only appeared in the late twelfth century and, more interestingly, they continued to be constructed well into the thirteenth. Thus a simple link between mottes and the introduction of knight service cannot be easily sustained.

A more sophisticated view of the relationship of mottes to feudal holdings and their geographic distribution has been developed by Simpson and Webster.⁴⁷ In general they argue that mottes emerged as the product of royal attempts to police the less-well-behaved parts of the realm (such as Moray and Galloway) or attempts to extend areas of royal authority where the mechanism of thanages were not available, as in the Peebles area. Seen from this point of view, the motte emerges as a device which was employed to resolve particular political and economic problems quite distinct from those created by the Norman Conquest of England. One of the most instructive examples of the political context in which a motte was raised may be found at Inverurie.

Keith Stringer's political biography of Earl David of Huntingdon (1185–1219) contains one of the more detailed assessments of the circumstances under which the social dynamics of a motte-and-bailey castle was introduced to Scotland.⁴⁸ Although Inverurie can hardly be described as the caput of a typical estate, the intention behind the construction of the motte may be representative. Earl David's activities are remarkably well documented, which makes it possible to know the background to the establishment of the regional centre of the newly created earldom of the Garioch at Inverurie. By knowing how it was used it is possible to recognise the intention behind the construction of such a castle. Inverurie was

modelled upon the caput of Earl David's principal English holdings, Fotheringhay, in the Honour of Huntingdon. Huntingdon was a good place to learn about mottes: it had one of the first mottes in Britain.⁴⁹ Huntingdon was one of the first (1067) places in the "north" fortified by William of Normandy, doubtless because this Saxon centre occupied a key crossing point of the river Ouse. In the twelfth century local trouble caused it to be seized and slighted and the motte now survives in a dilapidated state as a low mound. Only the large bailey gives a true indication of the original scale of the castle. As a replacement, a new castle was built at Fotheringhay (c. 1163), also a motte and bailey, and this remained the caput in Earl David's time.

Stringer makes a valuable comparison between Fotheringhay and the Honour of Huntingdon on the one hand and Inverurie and the Garioch on the other. The scale of both mottes is large, with the Bass of Inverurie being slightly larger. Both occupy key river crossings adjacent to the burgh. The main difference was in the scale of the burgh, which at Inverurie was tiny because it was brand new. These similarities suggest that in reproducing the form and setting, we see a desire to make the Garioch into the equivalent of the Honour of Huntingdon, which is to say bringing a fertile and strategic district under direct control of the crown.

The Bass of Inverurie, built c. 1195 as the caput of the Garioch, was the centre of a new earldom, probably created from pre-existing royal holdings especially for Earl David.⁵⁰ The Garioch was a large domain, but more compact than the ancient earldoms, and it was intended not only to consolidate holdings but to provide a strategic link between Mar and the north-east coast and the Moray coast. In Stringer's words:

the castle-burgh represented a broad-based instrument of government, fulfilling as one interdependent unit several roles simultaneously and making his [the earl's] authority felt in an indomitable manner. It was the pivot of economic administration for the castle-area, that is the whole of the Garioch, where revenues were received and kept in secure store or sold. It was the lord's residence and judicial centre. All of these functions were different aspects of the lordship it imposed to dominate and exploit the territory subject to its influence. It was also a strong military base ... and strategic considerations had been uppermost in determining its siting.⁵¹

In several respects it stood out from the ancient regional lordships, the earldoms of Strathearn, Fife, Lennox, Mar, and Buchan, with their traditional Celtic origins, in terms of prestige and with respect to the relationship to the king. Despite lacking in tradition it was well endowed and blessed with a burgh belonging to the earl and not the crown. The provi-

sion of the new earldom with a burgh to transform agricultural revenues into cash was a precocious innovation, even if it was slow to turn a profit.

It seems likely that the hall, tower, and associated castle buildings in the bailey would have been similar in function, if not in form, to those at Celtic thanages such as Dunning. The castle of an earl would naturally have been grander, but what really set the motte apart from the more traditional type of caput were the implicit meanings conveyed by the motte. Whereas previously stature and eminence of a lord's residence were supplied largely by the topography, with the classic motte, as seen at Inverurie, topography was made less significant, even irrelevant. The vertical mass of unnaturally steep earth crowned by a timber tower expressed control over nature as well as society. The most obvious aspect of social control was implication of dominance sanctioned by violence, which the Norman associations of the motte conveyed. This expression of military prowess was not misleading. Not only did the motte give the impression of power, they were effective strongholds, which properly constructed and manned could be formidable fighting platforms. Through the newness of the architectural form, the motte also signalled the introduction of a new, more European society based around a centralised royal authority, if only to those who were the agents and beneficiaries of this change.

It is important to remember that the significance of the motte varied from region to region depending upon the particular circumstances behind their introduction and use. In the cases of ten exceptional thanages which do have mottes we may be looking at a break with the traditional tenure. It may be that these mottes evidence the replacement, for whatever reasons, of Celtic thanes by men more committed to royal interests. In this and other circumstances the motte undoubtedly provided the new lord with a dominant aura. However, in ideological terms the spread through Europe of the palace with courtyard as the residence of choice for royalty and nobility was probably even more important.

ARCHITECTURE FIT FOR KINGS: THE IDEOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE COURTYARD

The most conspicuous early use of motte-and-bailey castles was in the burghs – Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen, Lanark – none of which were developed into major masonry castles or survive today. The most conspicuous absence of the motte was at royal residences. Forteviot, as we have seen, provides a significant insight into developments of a major royal palace beginning in the mid-ninth century.⁵² The Alcocks argue that the royal complex at Forteviot consisted of a palace, church, and royal cemetery. Apparently the palace was sited on a scarp overlooking the Water of

May. Although it was no doubt enclosed by some sort of bank or palisade, military strength does not appear to have been an overriding consideration. In selecting the site greater weight was probably given to the concentration of prehistoric burial mounds and ritual enclosures and to the desire to create a palace at the traditional centre of the old Pictish kingdom of Fortrenn. Stuart Airlie has made an ambitious comparison with the Carolingian Ingelheim, where the palace was the focal point for royal ceremonial events, legal pronouncements, and significant religious meetings.⁵³ At Ingelheim there were architectural devices intended to provide ideological support to the dynasty, which at Forteviot were provided by the prehistoric monuments.⁵⁴

In view of the continuing requirements for military strength, for both internal security and defence against significant Viking attacks,⁵⁵ one is bound to ask how could kings in the tenth and eleventh centuries have managed to live in unfortified or lightly fortified places? We should remember that sustained sieges were rare in this period so that at Forteviot defensive considerations could take second place to the architectural requirements for the exercise of royal power, as at Carolingian and Ottonian palaces. It is telling that the greatest earls also seem to have managed without castles. When they emerged in the tenth century, the regional magnates did not have castles and, interestingly, in Strathearn, Angus, and Fife they never got around to building a Kildrummy or Caerlaverock. The continental palace, like Ingelheim, may have provided the ultimate model for the style and organisation of the architecture of royal palaces which was eventually adopted in the thanages. Which is to say that for well-established lordships, conspicuous defences became less important than the signs of architectural sophistication, as can be inferred from the repeated remodelling of the halls but not the defences at Goltho.

THE CHURCH AS AN INSTRUMENT OF THE STATE

The blossoming of episcopal centres and the foundation of great monasteries are both phenomena of this era. The royal patronage which stimulated the development of the great medieval ecclesiastical centres demonstrates that they were an essential part of the growth of the state and not an independent development. Hagiographical conceit insists that spiritual considerations were uppermost in the minds of the great benefactors of the Scottish church, but it does not seem contradictory to suppose that David I or Queen Margaret were as driven by political considerations as by piety, indeed they may not have distinguished these in their minds. An appreciation that the church could be a focus for ceremonial expression as well as an instrument of administration was surely consist-

ent with contemporary developments in Europe.⁵⁶

In the church buildings we see an international architectural vocabulary being utilised to provide a basis for a hybrid form of political authority, which combined religion and relics with estate management and coercion. During the course of the period the emphasis shifts from naked force to the exercise of power through administration and ceremonial display. In the context of the emerging state, the large religious establishments provided the technical means of administering the expanding and increasingly unwieldy realm. The simultaneous development of the major religious establishments and royal administrative centres (which at Dunfermline and Scone were the same thing) was necessary because it provided the technology by which the power represented by knights and the incomes of the thanages could be controlled. But it was not just a theoretical or ideological development; religious houses also evolved means of practical application of authority. Dunkeld provides the clearest example of the direct political intervention, while Glasgow represents the more oblique approach where spirituality and parish management were essential ingredients of the political method. In this context the monasteries may be seen as the ideological centres where the religious administrative methods were perfected. At a local level the parish becomes recognisable at this time⁵⁷ and as we have seen the first church buildings appear, some of which were attached to thanages.

Without wishing to get involved with the details of the growth of monasticism, it is important to recognise that religious communities that were established in Pictish times contain the earliest recognisable evidence of the major endowments which were to shape the medieval Scottish church. In the late eleventh century, new towers were erected at the previously established communities of Abernethy, Muthill, and Brechin, while at Restenneth the tower was integrated into the church.⁵⁸ The appearance of towers has been linked to the first impact of the monastic revival of the eleventh century, which had its roots in the Carolingian empire.⁵⁹ In Scotland a significant stage in the growth of monasticism is associated with Queen Margaret's endowments at Dunfermline,⁶⁰ however, outside royal circles there seems to have been little enthusiasm for new monastic establishments by the rest of the nobility. Only in the late twelfth century does the endowment of abbeys start to extend beyond the royal household, as in the case of the earl Strathearn's grant to Inchaffray c. 1200 or the Comyns' Cistercian foundation at Deer c. 1219. As a general rule, the Celtic earls tended to "upgrade" existing religious communities, while Anglo-Norman lords tended to introduce new foundations, as in the case of the Stewart Cluniac foundation at Paisley.

Apparently in the tenth and eleventh centuries the endowment of religious houses was not an important way for the regional élite to exhibit

status and wealth. Perhaps it was simply too expensive, for material signs of patronage still seem confined to monumental sculpture as it was in Pictish times.⁶¹ An additional reason for the lack of motivation may have been that the administrative skills were not in demand. The internal workings of the earldoms and the thanages were so driven by tradition that writing was superfluous until the thirteenth century.⁶²

Great uncertainty surrounds the nature and status of the major religious centres in the tenth and eleventh centuries. However they were constituted, they cannot be regarded as elements of a unified structure. While the case of Dunkeld may be extreme, it is nevertheless instructive. From its establishment (c. 849) as the repository of Columba's relics, Dunkeld developed into a political strong-point. The selection of the site may have been as much for strategic reasons as for the presence of an existing Culdee community. The nuclear fort at King's Seat, Dunkeld,⁶³ which dominates the point where the Tay valley opens up, is one of the most imposing in Scotland. This undeniably strategic setting points to a strong military interest in the site going back to Pictish times. During its formative years Dunkeld figured prominently in the historical record, not for its religious accomplishments but because of its bellicose abbots; between the mid-tenth and the mid-eleventh centuries two were slain in battle amongst the Scots.⁶⁴ The abbey is twice mentioned in the context of Viking raids, in both cases with other secular strongholds (Clunie and Dunottar),⁶⁵ implying that Dunkeld was not so much an object of the raids as an obstacle to the raiders. It would seem that the abbots were acting much as any other mormaer or earl, nor does there survive much evidence that Dunkeld nurtured the contemplative life. Indeed, the most celebrated of Columba's relics, the Monymusk reliquary, although not particularly associated with Dunkeld, served as a battle talisman. Whether the abbots of Dunkeld can be considered typical is open to question, but their participation in violent political interventions cannot be questioned.

The change to more oblique methods of exercising religious authority was apparently a slow one. The gaps in the episcopal succession (1093–1109 and 1115–27) at St Andrews suggests that the most senior religious centres did not become important political instruments until the twelfth century. Or at least they did not become valuable to the state until they had been reorganised into territorial dioceses. At St Andrews the change can be documented by the construction of the splendid St Rules, which would seem to be a generation later than the endowments of Queen Margaret, and should probably be identified with the emergence of St Andrews as the principal see of the realm.⁶⁶

The process of reorganisation can probably be seen most clearly in the foundation of the new diocese of Glasgow. The beginning of the twelfth

century is the point at which the political and administrative value of cathedrals superseded the older forms of exercising power through religious establishments. It was not an absolute break and a self-conscious link with the past was promoted through the cult of St Kentigern. This political awareness is evident from its foundation: St Kentigern's cathedral was sited away from the existing religious centre at Govan with its archaeological links with the Strathclyde royal house.⁶⁷ The care and long-term planning behind the creation of the see by David I suggests a deliberate policy to establish an institution which could contribute to the administration of the lands of the former kingdom of Strathclyde. Glasgow's endowment ultimately included most of southern Scotland (excepting Galloway) and its administrative success can be measured by the number of royal chancellors who cut their teeth managing the considerable fiscal responsibilities attached to the see.⁶⁸ An interesting aspect of Glasgow's endowment was the granting of burghal rights to the bishop, which, at a time when most burghs were royal, recalls the arrangement at Inverurie.⁶⁹

Overall the changes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries redefined the old bishoprics and transformed key monasteries (Dunkeld, Brechin, and Dunblane) into bishoprics. This involved not only reallocating resources and defining the territory of dioceses but also taking the appointment of the bishops and abbots out of the hands of the chapter and local control.⁷⁰ This was a clear attempt to centralise these institutions and bypass the local, kin-based interests which would have certainly dominated in the chapter. Discussing these ecclesiastical changes, Donaldson has observed that "the principal revolution was not so much a change in the concept of the bishop's office as in the character of the lower levels of the ecclesiastical structure which carried with it the new notion of the nature of the diocese and an extension of the bishop's functions".⁷¹ The new diocese of the twelfth century, with its clearly-defined territorial jurisdiction, required a territorial parish, in the same way that a regional lordship required a thanage.

If the development of the parochial system was less well documented,⁷² it is nevertheless well evidenced in the late eleventh and twelfth century by the appearance of substantial, but plain, Romanesque parish churches. These are comparable in scale with those erected at the earlier monasteries. Indeed, the churches at Markinch and Dunning are of the same level of sophistication as the towers at Dunblane and Abernethy. Only St Rules stands apart on grounds of technical and artistic merit. Clearly the first parishes were based on pre-existing territorial entities, many of which had churches already, if the presence of sculptured stone crosses is any guide. In eastern central Scotland the natural unit for the parish would have been the thanage and it seems significant that both

Dunning and Markinch were thanages. This is not surprising and similar patterns have been observed elsewhere in Britain. Steven Bassett has argued that in the Welsh marches, particularly around Wroxeter, the parish was fashioned from a personal or tribal landholding.⁷³ Similarly in Wales, Wendy Davies has identified territories with a political significance that pre-date the formalisation of the parochial system.⁷⁴

The erection of these new stone churches appears to mark a change in patterns of patronage in which the focus of territorial gatherings receives more support than the dedicatory monuments. Perhaps we are seeing the scale of what could be supported by a thanage in a prosperous part of the country. For example, at Aberlemno, whose thane may still have been based at Turin Hill, there was an established tradition of substantial religious patronage represented in the Pictish cross-slabs.⁷⁵ This form of patronage died out to be replaced by a more prominent form of public display: ecclesiastical buildings. At Aberlemno we do not know what shape the Romanesque church took, but there survives a baptismal font of twelfth- or thirteenth-century date, which suggests that patronage was becoming more closely linked to the liturgical aspects of the church. One should recognise that although the early masonry churches are plain, against the timber and dry-stone architectural traditions, the buildings and the free-standing towers would have appeared as splendid creations which provided a far more visible representation of the patron's presence than even a Sueno's stone. Perhaps more important, they also provide an impressive setting for significant social occasions such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals. In these new churches we are seeing endowments which could more closely integrate ceremonies of lordship with the ceremonies of the church.

TOWARDS AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF ADMINISTRATION

Returning to the key question posed at the outset, of how the new social arenas contributed to the development of the Scottish state, it is clear that our answers remain speculative. We know little enough of the details of tenth- and eleventh-century castles, palaces, churches, burghs, and rural settlement; only the outlines are visible. However, it is possible to draw general conclusions about the changes in the form of power centres and their relationship with the state, even if the lack of excavations force us to look to remote places like Ingelheim and Lincolnshire for guidance on formal arrangements.

Throughout the period in question, the principal source of wealth remained the land and control over those who worked it, and as the authority of the kings of Scots expanded this changed only gradually. The royal administration of large disparate estates was initially structured

through the thanage, an institution with deep roots. The income from the thanages replaced booty from raids as the essential source of royal wealth, perhaps by the tenth century, and it remained the most important source of revenue until the burghs and international trade took off in the twelfth century.

The thanage, being based on the same "natural" administrative unit as the parish, provided a vehicle for introducing an order to the traditional "clientage" type of lordship. In the better-documented east, two settings emerge as important at this time: the estate caput and the parish church. At the caput "Iron-Age" architectural traditions were finally replaced by castellated architectural forms which derived ultimately from continental palace traditions. We have yet to excavate any of these complexes where residential, ceremonial, religious, and administrative were concentrated, but this is not because there are scarce. It is simply that no one has chosen to excavate them. Despite this lack of detailed knowledge, the thanage provides a benchmark which helps to make sense of power centres that were developing elsewhere in Scotland.

The adoption of the motte-and-bailey can be seen as a response to specific Scottish circumstances. We can see that by-and-large it was not suited to the older centres of power, but equally it had little to do with Normanisation on an English model. As far as can be seen this particular version of the timber castle was selected to deal with political problems which varied from area to area. Rather than regard the new institution of feudal knight service as an effort to Normanise the country, it should perhaps be seen as a kind of administrative solution which allowed the king or earl to secure coercive resources that were relatively detached from local interests. As a sort of feudal "privatisation" it allowed the lord to exercise authority without pre-existing working practices which might be compromised by bonds of kinship. Most importantly, it allowed networks of authority to be established in those areas outwith the thanage system.

The close correspondence between the parishes, the thanages, and the new church buildings of the twelfth century suggest that by then Christianity had become almost completely integrated into the formal display of lordly power. Churches provided yet another visually impressive venue for ceremonial display. Although Christianity had been an important political force since the seventh century, by the tenth it had moved onto a new level of significance. The degree to which Christian institutions had become acceptable vehicles for administering resources can be gauged by the re-emergence of the ancient religious centres. As far as can be seen, the ecclesiastical structure of the tenth century was dominated by the "Pictish/Celtic" establishment based upon ancient religious sites: St Andrews, Abernethy, Brechin, Dunblane, Dunkeld. By the thirteenth

century these were balanced by new cathedrals in the north-east and south-west. Arguably through their jurisdiction over their diocese, they also took the parishes out of local control and into more centralised hands. The distribution of preserved early church buildings is divided relatively equally among cathedrals (Dunblane, St Andrews), monastic houses (Abernethy, Brechin, Muthill), and parishes (Markinch, Dunning), suggesting that for a local magnate the first responsibility was to the established local churches, which may explain why the endowment of new religious houses languished for a while. Only the crown could get a direct administrative and financial benefit through the endowment of religious houses such as Dunfermline and Scone.

In 1249 the degree to which the traditional forces and those of orthodox Christianity were working in concert was displayed at the inauguration of Alexander III.⁷⁶ The ceremony at Scone was presided over by the bishop of St Andrews, but Alexander was not anointed and secular magnates had equally prominent roles in the ceremony. Some parts, such as the Gaelic recitation of the royal genealogy back a hundred generations, were manifestly Celtic. This glimpse into the ceremonial practices of the period makes it abundantly clear that, despite the outward appearances, like the non-indigenous "thane" and the motte-and-bailey castle, and despite the tendency towards centralised administrative institutions, the state which emerged possessed a robust national identity based upon a Scottish cultural inheritance.⁷⁷

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- 77 Since this paper was originally presented in a Scottish History Department seminar at Glasgow University it has undergone various changes, which have benefited from the generous advice and perceptive criticism of Dauvit Broun, Ewan Campbell, Katherine Forsyth, and Sally Foster.